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25 February 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Recent OCI Reporting on Ghana

Summary

On 24 February, a coup occurred in Ghana while President Nkrumah was en route to Peking. Over the past year, OCI reporting has noted persistent military dissatisfaction with the regime and pointed to a group of army and police officers who were plotting against Nkrumah. Because of government countermeasures and indecisiveness on the part of the plotters, the coup was apparently postponed several times. OCI publications have pointed out that the officers involved favored making their move either while Nkrumah was out of the country or when they could take advantage of an outburst of popular discontent.

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The embassy also has reported periodic build-ups of coup rumors, especially at times of economic tension.

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The CIB of 26 February 1965 commented that "any move to oust Nkrumah would require the support of the army, one of the few power groups not yet under party control."

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2. During the spring and early summer of 1965 a group of senior military and police officers continued to develop coup plots, to discuss tentative dates and occasions for overthrowing Nkrumah, and to vacillate about carrying out their plans. Younger, middle-grade officers were chafing over the failure of top military leaders to act. OCI reporting followed the ups and downs of the conspiracy, as indicated in the following examples.

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The CIWR of 4 June 1965 indicated that "anti-regime elements of the military and police might try to take advantage of any outburst of discontent to try to oust Nkrumah. Last month some younger officers were reported chafing over the failure of top military leaders to move against him."

The CIB of 19 June 1965 stated "Disaffected military and police leaders could well move against the regime soon, possibly during Nkrumah's current trip abroad (for the Commonwealth Conference)....Many military leaders have long been unhappy over Nkrumah's leadership. A conviction that their personal interests are now at stake could finally overcome their reluctance to move....The Otus (two brothers who hold high military posts) have also recently been in close touch with pro-Western Police Commissioner Harlley, who is said to be thoroughly fed up with the regime and to have aligned himself with them."

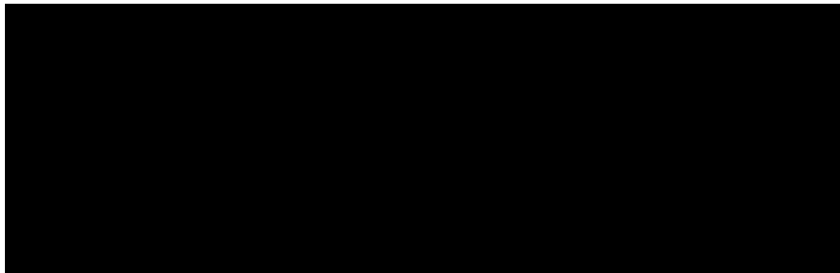
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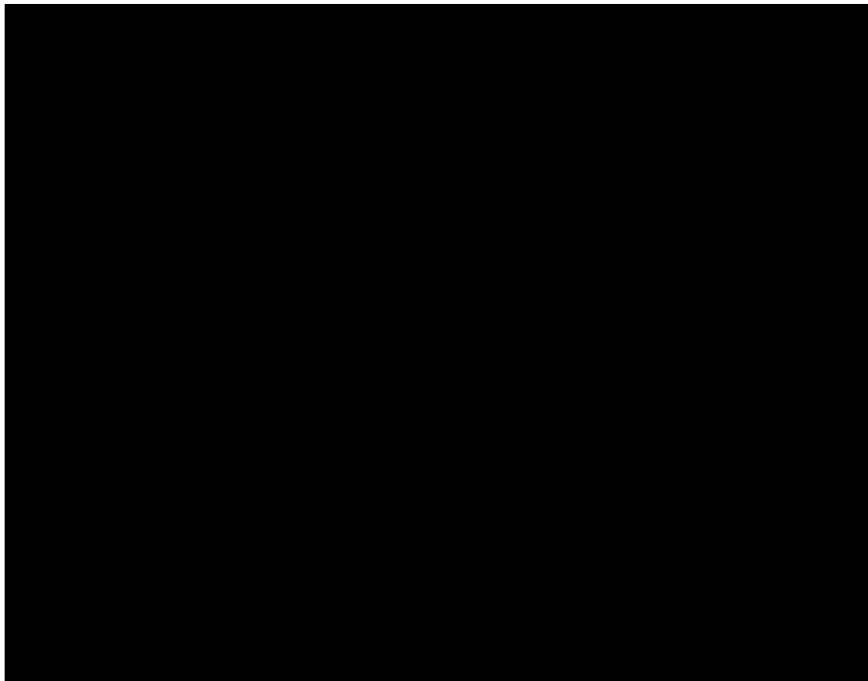
3. As the plotters continued to delay putting their plans into operation, Nkrumah took countermeasures in July which apparently put a stop to the plotting for the time being.

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4. The series of recent successful military coups elsewhere in West Africa apparently gave new encouragement to the Ghanaian plotters.

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